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Teen-agers'

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C O N T E N T S

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EDITORIAL

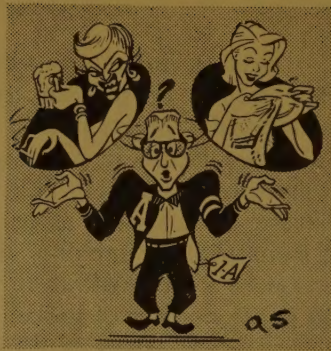
UBJECTS treated in isolation inevitably are unsatisfactory. The subject of modern teen-agers and their problems especially suffers from a tendency to isolate it from all other factors in contemporary society. To treat of juvenile delinquency fully, for instance, one would have to treat as well as our urban civilization, of our discouraging slum areas, of minority groups whose youth feel their social rejection, of the breakdown of family life (the increase in divorce and in the number of broken homes, of mothers working outside the home, of fathers inadequate to assume the guidance of their children, of children acutely aware of their unwantedness), of the lack of orientation and purpose of our society as a whole because of secularism and the tacit rejection of God. All these are relevant to a discussion of juvenile delinquency which would pretend to be at all adequate.

However, it is more comfortable for adults to look upon teen-age failures in isolation from their social setting. One's blood pressure rises, for instance, at the hypocritical complacency of some of the tabloids which underlies their apparent alarm at the rise of adolescent delinquency, at the appalling behavior current in our city high schools. The fact that they themselves may possibly be at least a contributory cause of this delinquency, through their lurid journalism and constant, all-out sex exploitation, is conveniently omitted from their "reform" articles. They—like the well-known writer of mucky mysteries who recently over the radio decried the effects of bad reading on youth—look neither to left nor to right. Their high-minded reforming to them has no connection with their past or present deeds.

The problems facing adolescents, more almost than any others, point up the need for reform of social institutions. It would be an exaggeration to say that the individual parent or teacher is completely helpless in solving (or better still, preventing) them, but it is nonetheless true that social pressures are such that this work is for the most part unbearably difficult. That is why one hopes there will be a great increase in apostolic effort among Catholic teen-agers themselves—along the lines of the Young Christian Student groups in high schools—to exert leadership and counteract the influences of their common environment.

THE EDITOR

Redeeming



Teen-age Gangs

Albert S. Foley, S.J.: Adolescent gangs are well on their way toward becoming the nation's internal headache number one. Night-riding as hot-rodders, rampaging as vandals, brazenly committing car thefts, sex offenses, and narcotics violations, the teen-age gangs are arousing a tidal wave of community indignation across the country. Many are operating in the nebulous area where adventurous activity verges on the criminal. They are seeking excitement in exploratory forays into the strange world after midnight. They are often overstepping the bounds of the law unwittingly, and are plunging into traps set for the adult lawbreaker.

Community reaction to these wayward adolescents has brought out many suggestions about how they must be handled. Some irate people favor ruthless repression. Others call for swift retribution in the form of stiff sentences in reformatories. Still others insist on expensive programs of rehabilitation, under the direction of psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. Few think of redemption or the Redemption. Yet it is only in genuine redemptive work for these lost and straying adolescents that hope of rescue abides.

In this much needed and least heralded apostolate of the present day, there is one quiet Catholic whose work merits some attention. She is a symbol and a representative of the many slumbering apostles who are engaged in similar redemptive work. Estelle Alston is a mild, modest, and dedicated group worker, deeply religious but not in the withdrawn manner. She is alert, vital, and out-going in her zeal. She has dedicated her life to the task of working for the adolescent gangs among the Spanish-American youth of Los Angeles.

For that task she had prepared herself professionally by securing her post-graduate training in group work at Catholic University under Dorothea Sullivan, one of the outstanding leaders in the newly emerging profession. Besides her field work in Washington, Estelle also spent two summers at the Detroit Group Project Summer Camp, patiently handling the emotionally disturbed children there.

In 1943 the "zoot suit" riots stunned Los Angeles into action against the growing threat of higher delinquency rates unless something were done by way of control and prevention. Out of this community concern arose the Los Angeles Youth Project. The Community Chest set aside a quarter-million dollars as an annual grant for the project. It was empowered to provide funds to existing youth-caring agencies for extension of their services in the critical "Youth Project Areas." These were the characteristically "slum" areas with substandard housing, high truancy, low income families, highest rates of disease, and greatest incidence of delinquency.

In 1944 the Los Angeles Youth Project directors inaugurated a series of intensive services to adolescent gangs not reachable by ordinary youth-caring agencies. These gangs were euphemistically called the "hard-to-reach teen-agers." The "Special Services to Hard-To-Reach Groups" was designed to operate outside the formal agencies in an effort to help and guide these gangs into wholesome activities. Estelle Alston was welcomed into this pioneer project in 1947. Her experience in a Catholic youth project as well as at the Detroit Camp helped the SSG staff to move out of the trial-and-error stage into that of systematic handling of the problem-groups.

contacting gangs

The major problem for the group workers was to overcome the gangs' initial hostility, suspicion, and oversensitiveness when trying to make effective contact with the gangs of Anglo, Mexican, or Negro youth in the slums. Insecure in themselves because of their inadequate home-life, their substandard neighborhoods, and their previous failures in school and neighborhood life, these teen-agers had usually banded together to seek security, status, and

Father Foley, a sociologist, is by now quite familiar to our readers. Varying his activities, he is at present conducting a workshop on juvenile delinquency at Spring Hill College, Mobile, Alabama.

especially an outlet for their feelings of hostility. Some of the gangs already had a long history of fighting with groups of more conformist youth who participated in playground activities. Others had been fighting with other gangs, with groups of servicemen and with youth of other races. Some of the individuals in the gangs were chronic truants, often involved in destructiveness, in petty larceny, and even in "joy-ride" auto-thefts. A few had dipped into narcotics and sex delinquencies. Others had been in and out of Juvenile Hall, the detention home for delinquents in Los Angeles.

It is not easy to make contact with and reshape these bands of lost youth. But once the police, the social workers, the playground supervisors, or the school officials have called their attention to the existence of a troublesome gang in a certain neighborhood, it is up to Estelle and her co-workers to make the initial contact and move on toward the building of a wholesome relationship with them.

A typical case will illustrate the problems encountered initially and at every step in the process. A wild group of junior high-school girls was ganging up on others at school, fighting with other groups on the playground and in the streets outside of school hours. They were so vicious with their fists, their fingernails, and their hair-pulling that even the boys cleared out when the fighting started.

The vice-principal told Estelle about the gang, giving her names and addresses and singling out the "leader." As in other cases, Estelle called at the home of the known leader, told her she was organizing a club in the neighborhood, and offering her the leadership. The girl accepted the idea of a club, but was suspicious of Estelle, fearing that she might be a plainclotheswoman. Next she went to the other members of the gang, urging them to join the club that the leader had agreed to head up. Some of the girls reacted with hostility. They said they didn't want to have anything to do with a club. One who later became a regular member said, "A club is like the Girl Scouts—to make you be good. I don't want to be good!"

"gang" into "club"

One after another, however, evinced some interest when some of the possible club activities were outlined. Estelle set a date and place for the meeting, and they came—in a gang. At the first meeting they argued loudly with each other, using all their slang at once and keeping an eye on Estelle to see if she would react like a teacher and begin scolding them. Instead

Estelle gently helped them in organizing and planning activities, agreeing to help furnish transportation to decent places for recreation or picnics.

To get at the root of their anti-social conduct Estelle spent many hours with them between meetings. She hung around with them at the hot-dog stand where they gathered, feeling them out, listening sympathetically to their stories, and manifesting a deep concern for their welfare. They found this most puzzling. No other persons they knew ever did anything for them unless they hoped to get something out of it for themselves. But Estelle's deep interest in them and their activities convinced them of her sincerity. They began to trust her and confide in her. They looked upon her as a sort of older sister who helped them with their difficulties. Some of the girls who were worried about their "boy-friends" began to ask her for advice. Previously they had permitted the boys to be free with them because they were afraid they would lose the boy-friends otherwise. Estelle by persistent counselling was able to instill a respect for themselves into them, and help them to draw the line in their relations with the boys. As the group built up its supporting and holding power, some of the girls who formerly tried to "sneak off" from a club activity when a boy whistled learned to stay with the club. One asked proudly at the end of a meeting, "I was good, wasn't I?"

By guiding the group into constructive and interesting activities Estelle was able to wean them from their street-fighting proclivities. Piling them into the car, she helped them get out of the depressing and maddening atmosphere of the slums. She took them on visits to the planetarium, to the radio or television studios, to the mountains and the parks.

In conjunction with one of the other workers who was in contact with a group of boys, Estelle planned many co-ed activities under proper supervision and in wholesome settings. The girls turned out to be typically feminine in their pride in cooking for the boys on picnics or at the beach.

They need encouragement

Rebuilding their attitude toward school is another vital area in the proper handling of gangs. With this one as with others, Estelle carried on long discussions about the value of education and the need of at least a high school diploma. She helped them with their attendance problems, and even assisted with their class-work and homework. Most of the girls had brains enough but needed direction, motivation and encouragement to face up to the many frustrations of school life. As these latter were at the basis

of much of their aggressive fighting at school, the clearing up of one led to the diminution of the other.

A further area of concern was the gang's attitude toward public officials such as police and the probation officers. Several of the girls were under surveillance of either or both because of previous records of runaway behavior or petty thefts. Estelle refused to go along with the punitive "lock-em-up" solution to these problems. The authorities tended to judge the youngsters as hopeless cases and to hound them incessantly, waiting for their next misstep. Estelle knew from their confidential talks that the kids were trying to better themselves and were improving. Her faith in them helped to keep them trying where the officials' attitude bred resentment, defiance, and despair. Estelle willingly assumed responsibility for the girls, urging school authorities and police and probation officers to give them another chance.

back to Church

Once this work of natural redemption had been pushed forward to this point, the work of their supernatural redemption through renewed contact with the Church could also advance. Estelle never failed to give them the good example of her own regular attendance at Mass. She was able to persuade the Catholic members of the gang to attend Sunday services with her. She gently induced them to have something else besides a wiener roast on Friday nights. Even when she took them up into the mountains for weekend camping trips, she always managed to pack the Catholics into her car and dash for the nearest chapel or church for Mass.

Estelle has had difficulty with some of the other staff members over this matter of religious practices. Some of them have made group work their religion. They tend to reject the Church just as many church members tend to reject them and their imperilled groups of unprivileged adolescents. But in course of time they have come to be tolerant of Catholic peculiarities—such as churchgoing on Sundays and not eating meat on Fridays. "I don't expect you to understand my viewpoint," Estelle told them, "but I do expect you to respect it."

On one occasion one of the staff challenged her. "Aren't you confusing your loyalty to the Church with your loyalty to your job?" Estelle came right back with the straight answer: "No, there is never any confusion in my mind. My Church comes *first!*"

It is only by thus giving unsparingly of time (especially in afternoons and evenings) and attention that Estelle and others of the staff have been successful in winning acceptance by these

hapless groups. Once accepted, Estelle has been able to work with the group as a whole and with members individually. She helps them by the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, by guidance and counselling, by "going to bat" for them with teachers and at court, and sometimes by securing for them the available community resources at clinics for dental work, TB x-rays, psychological testing, or general health measures. She has made herself indispensable to them by arranging for programs and for transportation for their outings or by signing for facilities for use at community centers.

Patient, intensive work

Leaving to the men on the staff the urgent work with all-boy gangs, Estelle has worked mainly with mixed or all-girl gangs. She has had her most spectacular successes with these twisted products of slum life. Not scandalized by their behavior, she has patiently helped them to work through their personal and group problems. Once the initial coldness has thawed out, she finds that they readily come to her as their adviser, their confidante, and their friend. To get to this point she patiently sits through hours of their discussions about the club name, the rules, the sweaters, and the important trifles of adolescent life.

Estelle has even bridged the cultural chasm that ordinarily separates the Anglos from the Pachuco-speaking Ladino girls. Pachuco is the intricate dialect which the youngsters use among themselves to keep adults (even their own parents) out of their secret communications. Estelle has mastered this secret teen-age language to keep up with them. She spans the social distance between Mexican and Anglo by being *muy simpatica* with their Mexican ways, by liking and eating their Mexican foods, and by showing her open devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe and her familiarity with the feasts and festivals of Mexican Catholic life.

In 1950 the Special Services for Groups Unit received a two-year grant of money for summer camps for the slum gangs. Like most Californians, Estelle loves the outdoor life. She is in her element with these youngsters on their camping trips to Sequoia or Yosemite National Parks. She accompanies them on their long hikes and their mountain climbing expeditions. The few weeks' relief from the stifling slums is good for their souls as well as their bodily health.

The summer work entails lots of added risks and responsibility. Wild under the controls of city life, the youngsters become quite a problem in the open spaces. Once, while camping at Yosemite, Estelle found two of the girls standing beyond the

guard-rail at the edge of the cliff above Vernal Falls, to have the pictures taken. In general, however, Estelle and her fellow workers keep the gangs out of trouble by planning an interesting and flexible series of activities for them straight through the waking hours.

After a year and a half or two years of intensive work with a set of gangs like these, they are usually developed to a degree that permits them to participate in regular recreational agency programs. More frequently Estelle and her co-workers stay with them until they disband. The girls get jobs or marry, and their interest in this natural chum-group dissolves. The boys go into the army or become involved in school athletics, in job-holding or in settling down for marriage. Estelle and her staff move on to another set of gangs, always remaining available for recall or consultation in emergencies.

confidence in their redemption

What impressed me most about Estelle's work with the hard-to-reach groups is her determination not to despair of their redemption. She refuses to yield to the snap judgment of self-righteous people who are quick to condemn the groups as incorrigibly bad. She even resists some overtures of hardened police officers who want her to turn over the gang leaders to them so that they can arrest the "ringleaders" and thus break up the gang. She is absolutely convinced that with proper guidance these groups can be redeemed. She has written that they are more ready to accept wholesome leadership than we are prepared to provide. While openly admitting that they have their faults, sins, and delinquencies, Estelle refrains from further complicating their case by rejecting them for the noise they make (as all lively youngsters do), or for the patterns of deviant behavior from which they have not been sufficiently protected in the raw life of the slums.

This does not mean, as Estelle has repeatedly emphasized, that she does not place limits or restrictions on the groups. She maintains that teen-agers want reasonable limitations. They want their leader to have standards. They respect an adult who, without being overly shocked at their bizarre conduct, will not contribute to their delinquency.

Estelle Alston is for me a good illustration of what our outstanding lay apostle once said: "Catholic laity, if they are only pious and not deeply spiritual, will not dedicate themselves to the hard technical and professional work required for the reconstruction of the social order."

In a field where technical competence requires professional training, Estelle has achieved high recognition. She was given the Koshland Award in 1949 as the outstanding group worker in California. She has written intelligently about the implications of the Los Angeles experience, her studies appearing in *The Social Welfare Forum* 1951, published by the National Conference of Social Work, and in *Readings in Group Work*, edited by Dorothea Sullivan and published by YMCA in 1952. Estelle also contributed much to the full account of the Los Angeles Youth Project written by Duane Robinson and published by YWCA in 1949, *Chance to Belong*. More recently, Estelle has been elected to the national board of the American Association of Group Workers. She is thus in a position to help from the wealth of her firsthand experience those who are grappling with the tumultuous problems of adolescent delinquency across the country.

needed: slum apostles

To meet the challenge of this problem we urgently need hundreds like Estelle Alston who will face the often frustrating work of trying to redeem these adolescent gangs. Like her, these apostles of the slums will have to resist the pessimism of the cynics who consign these youthful groups to the category of criminal gangs. They will have to show courage in the face of those who heap insupportable burdens upon slum families and lift not a finger to lighten them. Despite all this, the slum apostles must be found to do this valuable redemptive work. Otherwise we shall continue to act corporately as the co-executioners of a frightening percentage of our youth whom we annually commit to the dry guillotines of our "reform" schools and penitentiaries.



**I don't wanta play baseball.
Chores are sure not for me.
I certainly don't wanta do homework—
I just wanta watch TV!**

Crisis of Faith in Youth

ADOLESCENCE is a time of crisis not only for the young without religious training, but even for those who come from deep Christian homes. Mrs. Malley's article is the fruit of her experience as a mother, as well as of her intense study of the subject.

Elaine Malley: When we wish to express the serenity, simplicity and assurance of a faith, we call it childlike. No matter how old a person is, if his faith is like a rock, he is said to have childlike faith. And this is as it should be, because Our Lord Himself said, "Unless ye become like little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

But St. Paul said: "When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man I put away the things of a child."

If faith is to become a motivating force in the mature adult, these apparent contradictions must be reconciled, and it is during adolescence that they are welded into one truth by living experience. It is during adolescence that the child dies and the adult is born. And yet it is only the survival of the child in the adult that invests his life with all that is receptive to grace.

the living tissue

Clearly, what a child's faith is divested of during adolescence is its non-essential element, the seed-coat that protected the living tissue during the formative years. Up to now his faith has rested on borrowed convictions, those of his parents. Up to now his whole world has been encompassed by the reach of their arms. Up to now his parents have stood for him in the place of God.

Now he is beginning to have convictions of his own, he is beginning to find God apart from them, in himself, in his heroes and heroines, in the world about him, and in abstract conceptions of beauty, truth, goodness, justice.

The question that concerns parents is that of the survival of faith in its new habitat. When the children were little one simply told them what to believe and they believed it. They didn't take everything to pieces and examine all its parts under a magnifying glass. They didn't question fundamental doctrines. They didn't have to know the reason for everything.

violent extremes

Just as a baby, in learning to stand on his own feet and walk by himself, totters precariously, and occasionally comes a cropper

so the adolescent, in adjusting himself to the new world he is entering, and to the physical, emotional, and intellectual forces that he is encountering for the first time, will fluctuate between violent extremes, assume incongruous poses, and make some pretty spectacular blunders. Most of these reactions are simply temporary stances maintained only until equilibrium can be regained. Under salutary conditions the majority of the wounds suffered at this time are surface bruises.

Indeed they are frequently signs of robust spiritual health. They represent the skinned knees and scraped shinbones of the pilgrim soul on its first mountain expedition. The adolescent has just discovered a new gift: the flashlight of logic, the ability to link cause and effect, the power to reason things out. And he uses it on everything. He is apt to come out with sweeping statements about things he is discovering for himself. If he is intolerant of the opinions of others, it is because he cannot yet see things under all their aspects, in all their complexities. When he comes across a new idea, it is immediately highlighted by the intense spotlight of his rapt attention. His conclusions are based upon incomplete evidence, but he doesn't know the evidence is incomplete.

It is bad diplomacy to disparage his ideas. This only drives him to defend them more vigorously, and perhaps become more deeply entrenched in them. It is better to listen carefully to what he has to say and point out how logical it is that he should think as he does. Only by trying to see his point of view can the truth be disentangled from error. Once his confidence is enlisted it may be possible to show him other aspects which, because of his inexperience, had not occurred to him.

If his problem is not amenable to reason, because it concerns a matter of revelation that may not be disputed, assure him that what he is grappling with is a mystery, without giving the impression that there is nothing more to be said or done about it. We grow in stature and wisdom by leaning over the abyss of the mysteries of revelation and drinking from its living waters. Quote St. Anselm who said: "I believe in order that I may understand, not I understand in order that I may believe."

wall of reserve

The time to suspect that all is not well is when there are no bitterly contested truths, no stoutly defended heresies, when the adolescent shows an outward spiritless compliance with the formalities of faith, coupled with a stolid indifference to its vital implications, when he tries to hide behind reticence and silence. Of course, a certain amount of reserve and withdrawal is to be

expected. The adolescent is discovering that he has a fascinating interior life, and he will guard its privacy jealously against a invasion, except, perhaps, that of a kindred spirit—generally some one of his own age—to whom he may lay bare its treasures. But there is an ominous reticence—no parent who has experienced it can mistake it—which means one of two evils: either a serious infection of the soul by one of the three perennial plagues: the world, the flesh, and the devil; or, what is harder to combat, the contraction of that spiritual paralysis destroying our generation: indifference to matters of religion and of truth.

ounce of prevention

Most Christian parents know the measures to take against the first evil—the contagion of sin. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Preparation for the crisis of adolescence, for the first serious encounter with temptations against faith and purity, begins in the first years of life, with careful training. The will is trained by the imposition of appropriate duties, by demanding prompt and implicit obedience, and by encouraging voluntary acts of service and self-denial. The understanding is illuminated by Bible stories, by study of the Catechism, by good books and exciting discussions. The personality is enriched by good friends of all ages, creative hobbies, study, the development of wide interests. The soul is fortified by the Liturgy, by prayer, and, above all, by frequent reception of the Sacraments.

evil genius

It is the second evil—that of indifference—which parents find it difficult to deal with today. Every generation has its special evil genius which works through the imperfections and failures of society. What makes adolescent faith particularly vulnerable today is not so much spectacular immorality, although the commercial exploitation of vice and sex and sensationalism in movies and periodicals plays its part in undermining our youth. These flagrant scandals have their root in the secularism which permeates the very air we breathe.

For youth secularism frequently wears the garments of idealism. It generates the fallacy that from the stores of our personal experience we can concoct our own personal credo, as if faith were not a gift from God. This is fostered by humanistic concepts, by the naive presumption that religion, like government, can be regulated by man, and by a misinterpretation of the democratic principle of freedom of religion. It is especially appealing to young people who pride themselves on intellectual talents, for stamps them in their own eyes as independent thinkers.

Another snare is the deification of the word "faith," its use as a wonder-working invocation, completely independent of its Object. It is responsible for a blind optimism and also for such vapid monstrosities as the current popular song *I Believe*, which brings faith down to the level of a mawkish mood. Romantic youngsters are likely to be carried away by such sentimental delusion.

Parents are not immune to the various toxins that permeate our atmosphere. With them, the infection is likely to have become chronic, part and parcel of the way of life they transmit to their children.

One particularly American error is the heresy of hyperactivity. In teaching their children the value of work, of making profitable use of their time and energies, they exaggerate the importance of purposeful activity, and measure the importance of a person by what he can do. They rank achievement, *doing*, above virtue, *being*. While man must work to live, he was not made for work, nor for the impersonal goods that result from work. If youngsters are subjected to this false attitude to the point where it prevents their fulfilling their true vocation—the adoration of God and the love of those about them—their faith will shrivel, for the god of things requires no faith—only slavery. If, on the other hand, they rebel against this bondage, they may also rebel against the religion professed by those who preach it as if it were Catholic doctrine.

overindulgence

To go to the opposite extreme, solicitude for their childrens' happiness makes some parents overindulgent, eager to gratify, not only afraid to punish them, but fearful of letting them spend themselves in anything that requires abnegation. This is perhaps the most common fault, and it ranges from apologetic deference to the modern preoccupation with pleasure and comfort, to a tigerish determination to stand between their children and any menacing trouble. Because they are "sacrificing" themselves for their children, they delude themselves into thinking they are being good parents. In reality they are creating quicksands of selfishness and greed, cultivating an all-consuming soil in which no faith can grow. But it sometimes happens that their children feel, with Claudel, that youth "is not meant for pleasure but for heroism," and, finding no outlet for self-abnegation in the religion their parents avow, they turn to one that makes demands of them. They are ripe for communism or any other ism that will accept a measure of self-surrender from them.

responsibility of teachers

Sometimes it is not parents, but teachers, who infect children with doubt. At no age do children need a teacher more than during adolescence, for at this time they are turning from their familiar world to explore a world unknown, and they need a guide, a competent authority on the tremendous questions that are teeming within them. The right teacher at this time can point out stimulating heights to be scaled and inspire them with the confidence they need to reach these heights.

No one disputes that nuns or brothers who teach in high schools must meet exacting standards, first because much is expected of one who has dedicated his life to God, and secondly because they have to deal not with the easy, all-accepting trustfulness of little children, but with the critical appraisal of adolescents, who, while looking for perfection, are eager to pounce on every fault. And yet I am confident that many of the complaints made by fallen-away Catholics attributing their apostasy to class-room injustices are post-mortem rationalizations. Most children, especially those from large families, are too familiar with outbursts of human frailty even in homes where perfection is genuinely pursued to be deeply scandalized by its presence in the classroom.

What really causes damage is a tendency to stress non-essentials at the expense of the essential purpose of Catholic education: the formation of enlightened, apostolic Christians. Part of this is due to the necessity for keeping up with the requirements of state regents, and meeting the scholastic standards of secular schools. Part of it is due to the need to gratify the ambition of parents who look upon education as a means of rising in the world. Some of it is due to a provincialism which identifies Christianity with Americanism and attempts to vindicate it by its material achievements.

The dreary list of tacit fallacies and quasi-heretical practices can go on indefinitely: the use of religion as a means to a finite end; the confusion between patriotism, which is Christian charity put to civic practice, and nationalism, which is worship of state; superstitions under many guises; snobbery in any form; etc., etc. The point is that adolescence is the age at which children are capable of piercing through sham and hypocrisy. It is very possible that in spite of the errors of their parents and teachers they will see enough of the glory of Christianity to want to embrace it in all its purity. On the other hand, there is the danger that they will not only reject their parents' error, but with it the entire content

of their Christian heritage. Or there is the alternative that they will accept the defective religion they're given because life is easier that way, and so continue the process of the corruption of Christianity.

theology for parents

Parents dare not offer their children anything less than the truth. This does not mean that they have to be theologians. But their knowledge of their faith should at least be commensurate with the general level of their scholastic attainments. If it is not, they should be sufficiently interested and humble to be willing to repair the omission even now, so that they can help their children cope with doubt and confusion and misinformation. The worst thing they can do is try to justify their ignorance and even to make a virtue of it. "I trust the Church enough to believe whatever she teaches without having to have it proved," is a laudable attitude when there is no access to learning. In these days of universal literacy, and when the Church is being attacked from so many different positions, such an attitude smacks of intellectual and spiritual sloth. It may even give scandal to a youngster whose inner powers are just awakening to the life of the intellect.

Long before modern psychology dissected and analyzed the adolescent mind, the Bishops of the Church in many countries designated the onset of adolescence as an appropriate time for the rebirth of the spirit marked by the Sacrament of Confirmation. What happens to a child's faith between the ages of twelve and eighteen will be difficult to eradicate, for it is at this time that it sinks deep roots into the wellsprings of personality. In chosen souls it has born ripe fruit at this age. Catholic hagiology is full of teen-age saints and martyrs. According to tradition, Our Lady herself became God's mother at sixteen, and Christ made formal profession of His dedication to His Father's business at twelve. Certainly these are indications of how precious these years are to God.

It is important, during this period, to safeguard the faith from every danger. But this negative precaution is not sufficient. The faith must also be nourished. Not all the lost faith of our youth can be laid to corruption and violence. Much of it is choked by inertia.

need for action

Faith is made strong by the active exercise of virtue. St. James says of Abraham that "faith did cooperate with his works and by works faith was made perfect."

Adolescence flowers with its own special virtues: generosity of soul, a capacity for spontaneous response to beauty in nature and in art, the spirit of adventure, and a soaring, yearning reaching out for the things of God. St. Augustine, recalling his own youth, writes: "O Truth, Truth, how inwardly did the very marrow of my soul pant for You."

These special virtues need to be kept in practice. The active virtues, generosity of soul and the spirit of adventure, are exercised by the corporal works of mercy, by service and self-denial, by discipline and sacrifice. Adolescents are tireless advocates of great causes, and nothing thrills them more than the challenge of difficult projects. Fortunate is the youth whose parents ask great things of him, and, while commending the progress he is making, point to still higher objectives. It is often the lack of any sort of direction, the frustration of the spirit of adventure that leads the young to turn to delinquency, to perpetuate a sort of wry justice and force the attention of a preoccupied and indifferent world. Many communities are beginning to provide intelligent outlets for this passion for enterprise through Catholic Action. In one community they are giving their time to cleaning, repairing and painting the run-down homes in the neighborhood, as an organized service. There is a great need for young high school girls to give voluntary help in homes where there are many children and no money to pay a baby sitter. Some of the parish sodalities could make this one of their social activities.

reverence for beauty

The ability to respond to the beauty of goods endowed with values which communicate deep and eternal truths is one of man's highest endowments. It sees beauty not as a superfluous decoration for matter, but as an integral value in a created thing which evokes the image of its creator, and whose message is *Sursum Corda*. It is essential that parents try to cultivate this quality in their children and keep it from being blunted by the violent assaults that movies and TV make on the imagination, and by the wear and tear of the exterior traffic of the senses. How can their children be expected to aspire to Unknown Beauty if they are unable to appreciate Its reflection which is accessible to them in nature, music, poetry, and great art?

prayer

Finally we come to that which comes first of all—the life of prayer. Many parents who think they have started out aus-

piciously, with little tots kneeling at mother's knee and lisping their bedtime prayers, wonder why their teen-aged children break away from this practice. Of course, it is the whole infantile atmosphere of this kind of prayer that revolts the adolescent, plus the connotation that adults do not have to pray, but just sit and listen.

Family prayer should be something that it is a privilege to participate in, and also something to grow up to. Let father and mother take the leading part. Let the children's share be small when they are little—an Our Father, a Hail Mary, whatever they can manage. But let them see and feel that this is a time of great dignity and seriousness. *It is more important for the parents to pray themselves than to police the children during prayer time.*

Families have a rich storehouse of prayer in the Church to select from and *adapt to their own needs*. They might recite the Rosary together, or part of the Divine Office, such as Compline, in the evening.

The important thing, of course, is not so much the time spent on prayer, as the atmosphere of prayer in the home. And this atmosphere cannot be created by merely filling the home with the physical appurtenances of religion. As the Mystical Body in miniature, the Christian home is permeated with the breath of the living Christ. Parents can impose the externals of their faith only as long as their authority is accepted. Their enduring testament is the inner spark of faith which they ignite in their children, and this must be struck from the flame of their own unshakeable convictions which, of necessity, illuminates everything they do.

PARENTAL AMNESIA

When I was your age
I was really quite sage,
Experienced, strong, and mature.
I did what I was told,
I never acted bold—
I wasn't like you—I am sure!



Crabbed Age and Youth

Jill O'Nan: "Crabbed age and youth cannot live together," sang Will Shakespeare, who knew us better than we know ourselves. Undoubtedly he meant that we cannot live together *in harmony*, since of course and perforce we manage it somehow. "Youth is wild and age is tame," and I have yet to read an account of a growing family which ignores this contrast without raising my eyebrows above my glasses. The fact that these are Christian homes does not deny nature; the more apostolic the family the more conflict there is likely to be on the basis of non-conformity.

But I am here concerned with the surge of the will of youth toward freedom and self-expression, which is exaggerated, though scarcely inaugurated, during adolescence. In a pertinent and perspicacious article about teen-age delinquents in *Information* (January 1954) Robert Kass excoriates our contemporary mores and concludes: "The fight against it (delinquency) must start even as the baby is being brought home from the hospital. . . . Emotional imbalance starts in homes where there is no spiritual life, where both parents and children are merely Sunday Catholics, reserving the last hour of the morning for God and forgetting Him for the rest of the week." I propose to offer here, in all humility, our experience in rearing a family in this God's day.

Judging from what I know about adolescence today, I am inclined to think that it passed me by! I was born with a sense of responsibility, or acquired one very soon thereafter. Fretting at restrictions never fretted me. "Entirely devoid of aggression" is the way one of my friends labelled me in a psychological scrutiny. My husband is likewise non-aggressive, although he is more positive and independent than I. We are mild, though not entirely meek, quiet, contemplative, and thrive on orderly and simple living. But God has blessed our high-minded union with four children who were born with an urge to rebel in inverse ratio to ours. "Adolescence set in with demand feedings," my husband avers.

shaping wills

Wills are born, not made, and *shaping* them (*not* curbing them) is a lifetime work. By actual count our No. 1 son had been known to climb out of his crib twenty-two times in one evening, despite patience, distraction, cajolery, threats and spanking, in approximately that order. At fifteen months he was as

determined to express *his* will as he is today at fifteen years. He *will* not be pushed. It must be *his* will which propels his actions, not ours pushing him. He will do anything he's *asked* to do, within reason. He will not do anything he's *told* to do without saving face by postponing or otherwise shifting the order. During the formative years it is the parents' job to direct the child's will, after which the adult (if we are ever truly adult) takes over the struggle between "my will versus His will." It is hard work, it is back-breaking, never-ending work. But at the end lies sanctity—and salvation.

While I do not mean to go on record as an apologist for the strong-willed child, at least I am perforce a defender. Alice Meynell, the mother-writer who captivates me because she could go on writing with six of her offspring under her table, had this to say of the Child of Tumult: "The naughty child (who is often an angel of tenderness and charm, affectionate beyond the capacity of his fellows, and a very ascetic of penitence when the time comes) opens early his brief campaigns and raises the standard of revolt as soon as he is capable of the desperate joys of disobedience." I believe she was speaking of a six-year-old son, but her observation can be applied equally well to sixteen. Since we parents are concerned primarily with the pursuit of sanctity for ourselves and for our children, our main objective is not obedience as such, but only as it promotes and enlarges this capacity.

Only today our eldest, going on eighteen, flared up because I asked her when she had last been to confession. I was not checking up on her state of grace, as she goes to Communion every Sunday, but I keep a record on the kitchen calendar to insure some regularity. Her father tried to find out why she resented the question. "I'm old enough to take care of things like that for myself," she protested. "Then, when *did* you go?" he insisted. "I can't remember," she confessed. "Then you *aren't* old enough," he countered. She felt around for her words, "I know, Daddy, but *I feel* like I'm old enough, and it makes me seem like a baby to have Mom checking up on me, and *that* makes me furious."

Sound theology and good psychology agree that children must be guided into using their own wills independently and well. Obedience is sometimes looked upon as the only necessary virtue for children. Mrs. O'Nan (a Cincinnati mother and writer) points out the fact that the adolescent's drive for independence is not the negation of the moral law, but a necessary development if he is to become a mature, holy human being.

obedience isn't everything

To parents whose children are more amenable to suggestion this will sound shocking in the face of the Fourth Commandment. I admit I have been shocked for nearly eighteen years because obedience to parental discipline came naturally and easily to me. My mother was strict—but she was just and reasonable with her children. We were never expected to obey orders without knowing *why* it was necessary to issue them. In my innocence I had expected to carry on this enlightened despotism. I would never dream of demanding “blind obedience.” But the blindness was mine! I have a way of saying, “You can’t do so-and-so,” meaning cannot in conscience or your integrity won’t let you, but this goes down hard with the children. “I won’t—but I *can*,” they insist, asserting their free will. I bow to their greater wisdom; youth needs to feel the freedom of choice. Only later, when moral certitude becomes the reflex action of their integrated personalities, do the bonds cease to bind.

There is one parental advantage to this prolonged struggle for freedom, though the disadvantages are many and too obvious to mention. My husband maintains that I fostered the willfulness of our brood by offering them choices before they could handle them. These were non-essential, such as a boiled egg versus a scrambled one, a blue or a pink pinafore, etc. I didn’t do this intentionally, but I must have been unconsciously trying to compensate for my own prescribed childhood. If I need to offer any defense, it is this. Reading the heart-breaking account of the prisoners of war who refused repatriation, one sees so often the phrase “He was easily led. He never gave any trouble.” One bewildered father is quoted as saying: “If I could get into that explaining tent, I’d just say to him, ‘Son, march out that door, and go home,’ and he’d say ‘Yes, Daddy’ and march. . . . I could always scare him into doing anything, and that’s all that’s the matter with him. The Reds have scared him into doing anything, saying anything.”

The parents whose children have always been more prone to “no” than to “yes” are spared the necessity of untying the apron strings at any specific period of development. In the normal struggle for freedom through childhood the parent-child relationship is subject to a see-saw motion. Now one is in the ascendancy, now the other, depending on whether a situation requires discipline and direction or exploitation and expression. Adolescence, like the menopause, is an *agitato* movement of the personality theme.

Discordant notes are always present, but are later resolved into the *argo* or *andante cantabile* of a life in harmony with the will of the Composer.

more important is love

The drive for freedom during adolescence tends to over-emphasize the importance of the will in the expanding nature. Far more important to Christian character is the potential for love in the tender vine. Caryll Houselander remarks somewhere that spiritually minded children are not more likely to become saints than willful and mischievous ones; the one essential for sanctity is the capacity to love.

Of our three teen-agers, No. 2 daughter appears to be going through the most difficult adolescence. She is prone to crushes. Her loved ones are usually remote and sometimes even dead. Robert E. Lee supplanted Mario Lanza and "the late great" Hank Williams is her current favorite. Each in turn is enshrined; she surrounds herself with a magic fire and remains atop the holy mountain. At the moment she is engrossed in "country and western" music (hill-billy to you and me) and spends her time listening to records, reading the appropriate literature and writing inquiries to all parts of the country. We suffer and we smile, but we are humble, too, in the face of such overwhelming love and devotion. This is a "normal phase" of adolescence, according to the psychologists; like all things it will pass. What is so rarely pointed out is that only the nature capable of complete and selfless attachment is destined to become an artist or a saint. Love means to surrender like a river before it finds the sea, but certainly no soul is absorbed in God who has never been absorbed in anyone or anything else.

expansion of personality

She is more self-contained and *outwardly* more amenable than the other children. She was a placid baby and a gentle child, but she is so stubborn and sensitive that only her guardian angel knows how to handle her. She shrinks from, rather than demands attention. I believe she would like to wear a tarnhelm to render herself invisible, so she could see all, hear all, and store it away in her fabulous memory, without committing herself to taking any part.

This solitariness, or closing in of self, is typical of all phases of intense growth. Thus the foetus develops in the enfolding womb, thus the mystic finds his rebirth in the "dark night of the soul." Expansion of personality will inevitably follow, if the child has been trained to make "appropriate response to value."

This phrase I borrow from Dietrich von Hildebrand, whose inspiring work *Liturgy and Personality* develops this idea. A person he explains, becomes a personality when he *habitually* makes an appropriate response to value. In the hierarchy of values, the "classic personality" toward which perfection we are all striving consciously or unconsciously, "puts first things first." Adolescence or growing up, is the anteroom through which a person approaches his personality. Undoubtedly it is cluttered, for he is unsure what he may take with him and what he must leave behind. Like the preview of a movie all the most sensational aspects of his nature are telescoped together as though they represented the whole picture. Often as not they give a false impression of the complete story—but they herald what is to come.

vocations

When our youngest demands, "What is a vocation?" and we attempt to explain, his nature, so ardent and impulsive, leads me to suggest: "Who knows . . . you may be a missionary priest some day." His eyes search mine. "Oh no, Mother, I want to be married," and he throws his grubby arms around me. I am well content. Whatever his vocation, it will be lovingly and devotedly fulfilled.

On the subject of vocations, I think our schools need some re-education all along the line. Too often, only religious vocations are accepted as such in Class 1-A, with marriage trailing along as "unobjectionable for adults," but with nothing spiritually attractive to recommend it. Nothing of the sacramental glory attending the vocation of marriage is stressed. The mystical reality of our union as bride and bridegroom, dedicated not so much to each other as to Christ Who wishes to make use of us to beget a cult community of worship to His Father, is glossed over or not revealed at all. Writers on Christian marriage such as Karl Adam, Father Godfrey Diekmann and Father Gerald Vann should be required reading for religion teachers and retreat masters.

All through high school our oldest girl was indignant because during retreats sometimes as many as ninety-eight pamphlets on religious vocations were on display and only one or two on love and marriage. Father Vann's pamphlet *Christian Married Love* should be given to Catholic high school graduates along with their diplomas—if not before. The investment will pay off in inestimable riches.

happy results

Margaret Mead (*Coming of Age in Samoa*) finds the primitive youth facing the same dilemma as our (so called) civilized

adolescents. "He dislikes responsibility, but he wishes to excel in his group; skill will hasten the day when he is made a chief, yet he receives censure and ridicule if he slackens his efforts; but he will be scolded if he proceeds too rapidly; yet if he would win his sweetheart, he must have prestige among his fellows."

There is no need to enlarge on this summary. We are all familiar with its many manifestations. "I don't want to be nagging," one mother lamented to me, "but I must have told him ten thousand times to pick up his slippers and carry them into his bedroom." What we need now is to understand our objective, not count our ammunition. I too have exhorted: "Every act of carelessness is one of selfishness—*Someone* will suffer for it," to which he answered with, "When I'm forty I'll pick up stuff, too!"

I have lost the sweet temper of *my* youth struggling to *direct* these young rebels, but every once in a while now I can laugh up my sleeve. When our son is outraged because Sister X spoke lightly of Negroes. When visitors remark the tender companionship of all four with younger children. When they rally round to help entertain visitors of any creed, color or calling. "Do you have a certain time to be in at night, like me, Father?" (the youngest recently asked.) When, especially, No. 1 daughter sits in on a discussion of daughter No. 2 and asks, "Was I like that? Did you hash over me, too?"

Earning liberty

The psychologist will tell you that you should "work toward guiding his actions; not suppressing his emotions," but there is nothing new about that. The adolescent demands freedom, but God has granted it since the Garden of Eden, and with similar results. "The grave wound" inflicted on the will by original sin makes us all prone to its misuse. Only by the gratuitous grace of God are we enabled to shape our will to His. Freedom, if it is to mean Christian liberty, has a threefold flowering, according to Jean Mouroux in his treatment of the subject in *The Meaning of Man*: 1) Liberty demands self-mastery. 2) Liberty demands enlightenment. 3) Liberty demands a generous gift of self.

What could be more fundamental than this trinity of values? What parental program could be more concise or more conclusive? We have the duty and privilege of directing the wills (mastery), the minds (enlightenment), and the hearts (gift) of our children. Unless we take this as seriously as we do a balanced diet, the dentist every six months and no dates on school nights, we have missed the whole point of our parenthood.

The Confirmed Adolescent at School

MAKING her first appearance in *INTEGRITY* is Sister Francis Borgia, who teaches at Alvernia High School in Chicago, where the "quiet revolution" in secondary education for girls has been going on for some time.

"The doctor said he could cure me," said the pimpled freshman. "He says I have adolescence."

For many adults the word *disease* might be too strong, but certainly the current around *adolescence* indicates undesirability. The impression is that if anyone must work with adolescents let him wait patiently and most of them will come stumbling out of the dark sometime between eighteen and twenty.

Perhaps the connotation is a hangover from our using the word to describe the immature forty-year-olds. Hangover or not, it is a mistake to think of adolescence as an evil, as a lack. The adolescent girl is not an adult woman gone berserk. To see her as an irresponsible adult is not to see her.

adolescence is God's idea

No one would think of a crocus plant just starting to bud as something spoiled. Neither would we expect it to have the depth of color, the fragrance, the reproductive powers of the full flower. Wherever there is organic growth, there is adolescence. This stage of growth in all beings has its own beauty.

God desires the sanctity of the true adolescent, a pleasure no adult can give Him. The adolescent must be helped to see the value of making holy the work, the joys, the sufferings peculiar to adolescence. Seeing her adolescence merely as suspended living or a time of waiting until adults make room for her puts the young girl out of touch with reality.

To speak for adolescence is not to stand with those adults who would prolong adolescence unduly. It is not the best time of our lives or any such romantic gibberish. *Now* is the best time of our lives, for God is present to us in the now. And each now, whether of childhood or adolescence or adulthood, has its own joys and difficulties and responsibilities, deep and real.

(An aside: Many Catholic girls in the big city suffer from prolonged adolescence. Coming from a family of three widely-

by Sister M. Francis Borgia, O.S.F.

spaced children, living in an apartment where "there's nothing to do," spending most of their out-of-home time lost in large groups, they neither have a true adolescence nor are they ready for young adulthood.)

No one prolonged our Lady's adolescence unduly. Although she had had a true adolescence, Mary the Virgin was no adolescent when Saint Gabriel began his conversation with her. Perhaps the last sentence is unjust in the implied comparison between Mary and the present adolescent. Did the Fall affect Mary's adolescence? Certainly Adam's sin has affected the adolescence of his other daughters. What should have been a graceful and easy transition from the world of being protected to the world of responsibility for others is a time of scars for many.

Disorder, a nature divided against itself, is characteristic of adolescence. The child, even though she must cope with a fallen nature, is secure in the judgments and love of adults. The woman, even though she must cope with a fallen nature, is secure in her purposeful living, her co-operation with and worship of God. But the adolescent is insecure. She must swing away from total dependence upon adults; and the specific framework of her life has not taken shape.

time of contradiction

Anyone who works with adolescent girls knows that each is constantly fluctuating, is uncertain, is a composite of contradictions. Today all is futile, boring, what's-the-use; tomorrow plans are laid enthusiastically for total dedication to a great work. At one and the same time she possesses a strong yen to be one of a group, to belong; and a determination to be an individual, distinct from and in opposition to all others. She has great need to feel that someone cares specifically about her; but at the same time she must be independent of all adults. Great respect and serious consideration must be given her views today even though tomorrow they will have been irrevocably abandoned.

Whatever is old cannot be any good, simply must go because only the new has any value; and yet a nonsensical class tradition must be treated as if it were revelation. She is critical and ruthless at one moment; devoted and sympathetic in the next. No one may question her thoughts or actions; her actions are sacred. But she

wants nothing more than to have someone spend hours discussing *her*. Who is more cold and logical in appraising adults and who is more gullible? In one and the same adolescent girl there is evidence of heroic generosity and staggering selfishness. Between breaths she can move from a sense of future competence to genuine fear and a premonition of futility.

the big question

How is the teacher to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in forming these quick-silver personalities into feminine, functional, adult cells of the Mystical Body?

Sometimes the adolescent cell (fem.) seems functional—exclusively in tuning television sets, collecting movie-star scrap-books, attracting the fellows, being “in on it.” At other times she seems to be the good girl, willing to spend hours sorting clothes for the poor, addressing envelopes for the parish, drumming up subscriptions for a Catholic magazine, planning for an interracial study day.

Common sense says the adolescent is a mystery already in the natural order, never to be completely understood or fully known. Common sense also says she is a genuine person with all the value and worth of a human person. She is someone to work with, exchange ideas with, count on, listen to, hope for, love. Faith says the adolescent girl is both baptized and confirmed. She has hidden within her the powers to fit herself to live in love with the Trinity now and always. She has hidden within her the powers to reshape some part of this bent, old world as her gift to man and God.

Very simply the question is how to help the adolescent girl become a saint: sane, dedicated, joyous. We must do it in two ways: help her untie adults’ apron strings, and help her to tie on her own apron.

The sentence is not meant to be smart. The true teacher of the adolescent girl must be concerned both with helping her to establish a rightful independence and with helping her assume her God-planned social function in the Mystical Body. Failure to balance the two needs may produce sweet-young-things or social go-getters but never saints.

The first is necessary because more than anything else she needs security, not the security of childhood but the security within herself of knowing the truth and having the power to shape a life around it. She needs an independent dependence upon God. The second is necessary because she needs to learn *to love* to be an adult

woman. In fact to be secure she needs a full-time commitment, a dedication of herself concretely and tangibly to something bigger than she is.

It takes a very definite *what* and a very definite *how* to work effectively with the Holy Spirit. Both the *what* and the *how* need much more study and experimentation. But there is a more or less quiet revolution occurring in Catholic high schools for girls. The ideal Catholic girl of the 1920's is very different from the ideal Catholic girl of the 1950's.

what should be taught?

It is impossible to give a comprehensive view of the content of a whole curriculum, but certain major ideas need emphasis.

1) *The nature of the Church, Christ's new body, His means of extending Himself to all men and of assuming all men to Himself.* This is the key *what*. When the adolescent girl makes a genuine discovery of what it means to be a member of Christ all other contradictory urges find their right places. This study proves to be the most transforming and revolutionary of all. All other studies come back to this one as the center because at the center of the Church is Christ.

2) *The understanding that a lifework (marriage, for most) is chosen in view of the work of the Church.* What it means to an adolescent to understand marriage and sex within the work of the Church! Many adolescent girls are tortured with discussions of conduct on a date, divorce, birth control when these things are talked about without any connection with the Church.

3) *The need for the reconstruction of human society.* This *what* demands a thorough study of the social sciences: What are good and what are detrimental social institutions? How did the present social institutions come into being? What are the Pope's plans for reconstruction?

4) *The sacredness of the human person.* There must be a horror of calloused brutality toward others and a sense of the uniqueness of each individual. It's a difficult *what* to pin down, but it should certainly be the by-product of a well-organized literature course.

Other *what's* in need of emphasis: the value of work, reverence for and a sound knowledge of the physical universe and the technical progress of our time, the value of poverty and the place of money.

how shall this be done?

The *how* is very important if a genuine discovery of the truth is to be made and if right responses to the truth are to become habits.

1) *The adolescent must be given a chance to think for herself.* This means a chance to say what she really thinks, not merely what she is expected to think. It means a chance to work out ideas and difficulties, not merely to listen and take notes. It means a chance to learn to judge, to be rightly critical, wary, of the values presented in any form of communication. It means a chance to form convictions about life-sized ideas. No high school curriculum can provide the opportunity for a realization of all ideas; a selection must be made. The major ideas need to be arranged in a pattern that permits an organic growth. The pattern must include a careful selection from the writings of great minds, of people who have entered into life and are able to reveal it to others justly and fittingly.

2) *The adolescent must be given a chance to think prayerfully.* Definite training and time must be given to creating a deep friendship with the Holy Spirit to turn knowledge into wisdom. The only safe knowledge for a woman is that which she knows in the presence of God.

3) *The young girl needs a chance to fall in love with the truth through the beautiful.* This is a neglected area. So long as our adolescent girls find their delight in the cheap and the pretty, we will look in vain for women. It is through the beautiful that we are purified, learn to reach out and live in wider dimensions. Creative work, work done lovingly and well, must become the natural work of the many and not of the few "talented." Appreciating and creating works of art—singing, ceremonies for feasts, discussions, bulletin board material, poetry—all these are a sound way to enter into vital contact with life.

(Always we are working toward the confirmed young woman who can take her role at Mass—therefore the whole of her life—intelligently and deeply and "gracefully." Somewhere someone should set down in cold blood just why the whole liturgical and apostolic renewal is crippled because we neglect the beautiful.)

4) *The adolescent needs to meet people.* When it comes to giving adolescent girls a desire to enter into contract with God in some vocation there is no substitute for meeting people-who-are. Students absorb attitudes from the people they meet not so much always from what they say as the joy or peace evident while they say it. Lectures, tours, interviews for articles, these as well as

5) *The adolescent needs greater opportunity to choose freely do what is right.* Going to school with eleven hundred others is a put the clamps on this one for the student. But with sincere efforts much can be done to toss out the useless check-up, to keep minor things from becoming obligations, to give students progressively more room for free choice. (Babies are limited in their use of God.)

Conclusion

Adolescents are not children today and adults tomorrow. We must provide life-experiences for them, genuine experiences that produce true effects. They are confirmed; they have the powers and responsibilities, the potential for suffering and joy of the confirmed. It is our responsibility to see that they establish a pattern of living in accord with their stature.



The mother who "always knows best,"
Is a somewhat tolerable pest.
But wholly reprehensible
Is the mother who's indispensable!

About High School Retreats

WE noted recently that retreats no longer seem to be exclusively designed for those young people who are headed for convent and seminary, but are looked upon more and more as exercises for the ordinary Catholic teen-ager. Father Egan's wide experience as a high school retreat master makes his article especially valuable.

Daniel Egan, S.A.: As I write this article a train carries me to another city to my next preaching assignment. Yesterday it was an adult mission, tomorrow it's a high school retreat. Across the aisle a woman, evidently a mother of teens, is reading the *New York Daily News*. Looking worried and disturbed, she is studying a sensational article describing the shocking conditions existing in public high schools.

For almost ten years now I've had the blessed and priestly privilege of conducting missions and retreats. All kinds of them. Today, when asked which kind I prefer, my answer is always the same. While trying to leave each choice to the operations of God's will, I do prefer high school retreats.

Certainly they're harder to give. They're more difficult. They take more out of you because you must give more. They're more exhausting and discouraging and disillusioning and even more so than anything else. But I still prefer them.

For one thing, because the criticisms and reactions of modern teens are so brutally yet disarmingly frank, there's no preaching that will keep one more humble than preaching to youth. Because their appreciation is so very sincere and their praise so devoid of *adult* flattery that, when it does come—spontaneous, unrehearsed, uncalculating—it is one of the deepest human joys of the priesthood. And because their potentialities for good or evil are so terrific, because the stakes are so high in terms of eternity, there is no type of retreat or mission work more suited to draw a priest closer to God, make him so completely dependent on divine assistance and thus deepen the roots of his own spiritual life than working with and for today's teen-agers. It is because of all this that I prefer conducting high school retreats.

frightening experience

I'm humanly frightened about tomorrow's retreat because I can already picture a school auditorium crowded with precious, mortal souls in the most impressionable ages of their life. Tomorrow it will be over six hundred girls, ages sixteen to eighteen. After that twelve hundred boys—same ages. For three days as I look into this sea of faces—some eager, some listless, some defiant—I will be overwhelmed with the fearful conviction that their whole future, for time and eternity, may well depend on how they accept or resist God's grace on *this* retreat. The fundamental inactivity of some will leave me momentarily speechless. The terribly sinful attitudes of others will move me to a frustrated feeling of utter uselessness unless God takes over with a miraculous deluge of grace. In between I can visualize hundreds of indifferent kids, apparently untouched by Catholic education, who will make up tomorrow's tremendous leakage from the Church.

What an obvious challenge such an audience presents! Possessed with more seriousness and personal initiative than the previous generation, these teens are the Church's whole hope for the future. Their flair for independence, their willing eagerness to follow a leader, their spirit of daring for anything "new"—what fertile natural soil to develop basic wrong attitudes for the future! To save one of them *now*, to change a present bad disposition in one of these *now*, may have its effects in the lives of hundreds and thousands for the future. Under God, the very salvation of children yet unborn will depend on resolutions and decisions made at *this* high school retreat. No wonder such a retreat scares me!

Why have a retreat?

It is hard to understand why many a Catholic high school never has a retreat. They have everything else. Read through their year books and see. And to offer such a privilege to seniors only is being rather blind to the painful reality that very often it's too late when they're seniors. To have one retreat for all four years together is better than none at all, but it is so very difficult to talk to all adolescents in the same way about the same things. The ideal arrangement, of course, is to have four retreats a year, one for freshmen, one for sophomores, one for juniors and one for seniors. They are *that* different and their problems are *that* different. But to have none at all on the excuse that the schedule is too full is no excuse at all. These same schools have so many hours for "gym," educational films, assemblies and, of course, play practices. But no time for what should be the most important

single event in the schedule of every Catholic high school—the annual retreat.

True, there is always the parish mission, and no retreat can take its place. In fact *no* spiritual function of a school should draw its students away from their parish. It should be one of the most obvious aims of every Catholic high school to prepare students for active, intelligent participation in parish life. In fact, again, being realistic, let's face the disturbing reality that the vast majority of our adolescents never attend their adult parish missions. And this for the understandable reason that the sermons and topics are frequently out of touch with their life and their problems. Actually a Catholic teen-ager attending a Catholic high school can sit right in front of a religious teacher for four full years and not once attend the Sacraments. Teachers in large Catholic schools just don't know if their students attend the Sacraments and some parents just don't care. And the average parish priest in a large city parish can't keep up with the spiritual life of his teen-agers. What a providential solution a *good* high school retreat! Since they *have* to attend, what a challenge and an opportunity! In such a net, what a cast of fishes!

how to reach them

In three days' time the priest utterly exhausts himself in trying to reach as many souls as possible. In between each conference, during lunch hours, after school and again after supper he must make himself available to hear hundreds of confessions. His words and actions he must so radiate the kindness and sympathy and understanding of Christ that "crazy mixed up kids" will be encouraged to tell everything and anything in the sacred tribunal of Penance. This is the greatest joy of a good high school retreat.

To make it a good retreat no ordinary talks will do. The kids must be *moved*. And they will be moved not by oratory in a beautiful style but only by the grace of God that works through the terrific enthusiasm, the obvious sincerity, and the blunt, hammering blows of a direct approach that fairly swoops them off their feet. They must actually see and sense that this topic is more than just another sermon. They must get the definite conviction that "what Father is talking about must be awfully important"—and not just in a vague way. "By the tone in his voice, the expression in his face, the examples he gives—I can see that it *is* important for me *personally*!"

And yet, no matter how enthusiastic we become about some topics they leave an adolescent audience ice cold. Kids are qu

agmatic. They just can't see how *this* topic means anything to them. If they don't, they're bored—and they show it. True, it's quite possible by the sheer force of one's personality and eloquence to hold the interest of teens on retreat. Yet after it's over—what?

What to talk about

Somehow the retreat master must so understand these modern teens that he knows just *what* to talk about. Guess work will never do. There's too much at stake. Three days is such a short time that one must be ruthless in discarding any and all topics that are not best for them here and now. But the way these truths are reduced down to the problem of modern teen-age living, the way they are related to the hopes and desires of youth is a task that would test the patience, zeal and theological training of the priest.

Years ago it was my privilege to be a pupil of the late Msgr. John M. Cooper at the Catholic University of America. In his graduate classes he would frequently discuss what should be taught to high school students. He would constantly insist that if we could give them only a half dozen big, basic ideas; if they could build on to those ideas and *live* them the rest of their lives then everything else is accidental. How true this is!

If among the thousands of adolescents who graduate each year from our Catholic high schools there are so many who prove their disappointments to their priests and teachers, could it not be that some place along the line we have failed to give them the one *big* principle of life? I read recently that ten years ago our Catholic people were spending each year seventy-five million dollars on our school system. If we count in the thousands of priests, brothers and sisters who spend their lives and talents in the education of youth it's disturbing to think that in so many, many cases it's all wasted. What good are our Catholic college graduates today? What influence do they exert in American social and political life today? Could it not be that something *big* was left out in their adolescent training? If among the millions of Catholics who "attend" Holy Mass on Sundays there are so few who are really *holy*, is it not in large measure due to an over-concentration on accidentals and missing the big essentials?

It would be unfair and unjust to suggest even that priests, brothers and sisters are failing in their responsibility to youth. After all, adolescents spend much of their time in and under other influences—mostly quite pagan. But since most of us can look back and recall, with deep gratitude to God, how some one good retreat worked such a deep influence on our lives, couldn't a similar retreat work equal wonders among youth? Most deeply religious

people who live very close to God can usually trace back the beginnings of it all to their early adolescence. Something "hit" either hit them or dawned on them and they were never quite the same. What are some big attitudes worth giving them?

basic ideas

1) *The Catholic conscience . . .* This is always a good place to begin a high school retreat—any retreat, in fact. We may not presume that our Catholic teens have a Catholic conscience. A thorough examination of one at the outset of retreat is the best way to conform their consciences with what is objectively true and Catholic. Today our teens seem to take a certain pride in being "crazy mixed up kids."

2) *Horror for sin . . .* The very absence of this sense of horror is shocking in itself. The commonness of sin is wilting and paralyzing their whole thinking. Even if they *know* what Catechism says about sin very few seem to admit that it's true. If they do, they don't *live* it. By every kind of vivid example we must force them to accept, admit and live all that we teach of the horrible effects of sin.

3) *The priceless possession of sanctifying grace . . .* What a big principle of life this is! How many of our adolescents give only a notional assent to this most consoling, thrilling and sublime of all God's revelations! They have developed unconscious Protestant mentality about justification, sometimes never accepting the effects of sanctifying grace in relation to confessed and forgiven sins of their past life.

4) *The tremendous reality that God is their Father in heaven . . .* Once they accept this, what a change in their lives! That He cares, that He understands, is the only solution to all the changing moods of youth, their feelings of being misunderstood, their doubts and anxieties for the future. Christ, the self-revelation of the Father, must be made a vivid and ever present reality in their lives. His personal love for them, His physical presence in the Eucharist, His loving invitation to "Come to me all you (kids) who labor and are burdened and I will refresh you"—this must be a big conviction in their lives.

5) *The difference between knowing prayers and knowing how to pray . . .* I believe it was Augustine who said, "If you pray well, you will live well, if you live well you will die well, and if you are well—all is well!" This is so true of adolescents. So many of them have never matured in their prayer life. It's still "O bless mommy" and "Gimme a better date." There's no loving conversation with God. They don't know *how* to pray.

6) *The meaning and importance of character . . .* This should be one of the most important talks on retreat. It should be the aim of Catholic education to help develop character. By the use of a blackboard and specific examples it is quite simple to prove to a teen audience that our very *salvation* depends on this. Sanctifying grace will be lost five minutes after confession unless it is firmly built on the natural foundation of good character. This means that the penitent's life is so dominated and controlled by principles that no monetary "urge" or pull of the crowd will induce him to be really "chicken" and lose, through sin, the friendship of God.

7) *Problems of dating, and the dignity and sanctity of sex . . .* We must never fall victim to the modern heresy of making this a *only* teen-age problem. Neither should we stress it out of all proportion. If some teens had their way, especially sophomore girls, it would be. Nevertheless it is a very disturbing source of confusion to most teens and one of their big problems. In this regard there must be no guess work. Besides knowing our moral theology of what is a sin and what isn't, we must be able to give them some positive, constructive advice. More "dos" than "don'ts"!

8) *Everyday sanctity . . .* The daily practice of some simple acts of sanctity is the surest way to foster religious vocations, holy, happy marriages and careers of Catholic Action. It is the only way to stir our youth from the apathy of indifference which may weigh them down in a rut of mediocrity all their 'adult life. To give them a little taste of the indescribable joy of living always in God's presence, of knowing and loving every expression of His will, of the priceless value God sees in doing all things well—of His love and souls—to whet their appetites for more of this would be an incentive to make a school faculty pray and sacrifice in advance of the annual retreat.

won't do everything

There is no suggestion here that one or two or three good high school retreats will change an adolescent. It is not a panacea for all the cries about teen-age delinquency. And yet I am convinced more and more each day that if Catholic youth were put in the proper mood long in advance, if they disposed themselves to receive God's grace without any resistance, their aptitudes for goodness are so profound that a good high school retreat each year really is the solution to many a problem that other approaches have failed to solve.



Mary and Catholic Action

On December 8, 1953 the youth of Italian Catholic Action were gathered around radios in churches, chapels, rectories all over Italy to hear the words of our Holy Father. He spoke to them of the Mother Mary, and these are his words:

"Let us take as our guide the Sacred Liturgy, which never tires of addressing Mary with the words: *pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol, terribilis ut acies ordinata*, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array.

"1. First of all, beloved sons and daughters, fix your gaze on Mary, 'fair as the moon.' This is a way of expressing her eminent beauty. And how beautiful must that Virgin be! How often have we been struck by the beauty of an angelic countenance, by the charm of a baby's smile, by the fascination of a pure glance. Surely God has impressed all the splendors of His art on the face of His Own Mother! The glance of Mary. The smile of Mary. The graciousness of Mary. The majesty of Mary, Queen of heaven and earth. As the moon shines brightly in the darkest sky, so the beauty of Mary surpasses all other beauties, which seem like shadows in her presence. You know, beloved sons and daughters, how easily human beauty, passing as the bloom of a rose, enraptures and exalts a sensitive heart; how would such a heart respond to the beauty of Mary if it could look upon it unveiled face to face? So Dante saw her, in the midst of 'more than a thousand angels making festival . . . smiling at their sports and to their songs, a beauty which was gladness in the eyes of all the other saints' (*Paradiso*, Canto XXXI 130-135).

"It is not only natural beauty that shines in her face. God has filled her soul with the plenitude of His riches by a miracle of His power and then caused some of that superhuman and divine dignity to pass into her glance. A ray of God's own splendor glistens in the eyes of His Mother. Do you not think that the face of Jesus which the angels adore, must reproduce in some way

features of Mary's face? The face of every child reflects that of his mother. 'Fair as the moon.' Blessed he who can see thee, Mother of the Savior, blessed he who can rejoice in thy presence, who can stay by thy side, O Mary, in thy own house to serve thee always!

"2. Now the Church likens Mary not only to the moon, but again using Sacred Scripture (*Cant.* 6, 10) turns to a stronger image and exclaims: You, O Mary, are bright as the sun.

"There is a great difference between the light of the moon and that of the sun: the sun sheds a light that warms and vivifies. The moon shines on the mountainous ice caps of the poles, yet the ice remains solid and unfruitful, as darkness and freezing weather remain during the moonlit nights of winter. The light of the moon carries no warmth, no life. Only the sun is a fount of light, of heat, of life. Now Mary, who is fair as the moon, shines also as the sun irradiates a vivifying warmth. Speaking of her, speaking to her let us never forget that she is our real Mother, because through her we have received divine life. She gave us Jesus, and with Jesus the very source of grace. Mary is mediatrix and Monomer of grace.

"Bright as the sun. Under the light and heat of the sun the plants of the earth flourish and bring forth fruit: under the influence of this sun who is Mary good thoughts flourish in souls. Perhaps at this moment all of you are under the spell of the Immaculate Virgin, Mother of divine grace, Mediatrix of grace, Queen of the universe. Would that we had the voice of a St. Bernard who even now never tires of praising, of singing, of wondering, of exulting before the throne of the Virgin in heaven. Would that we had the tongues of angels to confess the beauty, the grandeur of their Queen.

"Recall, beloved sons and daughters, the story of your own life; does it not seem like a tissue of God's graces? Then you can reflect: in each of these graces Mary has had a part. The flowers have bloomed, the fruit has matured in my life, thanks to the warmth of this woman, who shines like the sun.

"Did you pray this morning? The grace that moved you to this exquisite act of piety was, perhaps, a special grace from Mary, came to you through Mary.

"You are listening to these words of Ours in honor of the Virgin; one word perhaps will penetrate more deeply into your heart arousing a pious sentiment or an ardent longing. This is a grace that has reached your soul through her intercession, a ray of light from the sun of heaven, who is Mary.

"Do you hope that one day you will enter heaven by a grace of final perseverance at the last moment of your life? Are you confident of dying in the grace of God? Even this grace will come to you who are devoted to Mary with her smile as a ray of heavenly light.

"3. A third image is taken from Sacred Scripture by the Church and applied to Mary. Mary in herself is beautiful as the moon, shining on those around her like the sun, but against the 'enemy' she is powerful, terrible as an army set in array. On this day of joy and exultation, God knows how much we would like to ignore the bitterness of the times in which we live. Yet the dangers that threaten mankind are so great that we can never cease to cry out a word of warning. There is an 'enemy' who is pressing at the gates of the Church, menacing souls. And behold here is another aspect of Mary—and most timely—her strength in battle.

"God's first word about Mary, right after the sad fall of Adam (according to not a few saintly Fathers and Doctors) tells us of the enmity that shall exist between her and the serpent, the enemy of God and man. As it is essential for her to be faithful to God so it is essential for her to conquer the devil. Spotless herself, Mary has crushed the head of the serpent, the tempter and destroyer. When Mary approaches, the devil flies as darkness flies when the sun bursts forth. Where Mary is, Satan is not; where the sun is, there the power of darkness is broken."

The Holy Father then exhorts his hearers to imitate Our Lady and to reproduce these features of hers in their own lives.

"We wish, above all, that you as Mary's children would try to reproduce in your own souls Mary's superhuman beauty. Following her example have a perfect union with Jesus. May Jesus be in you and you in Jesus so that your lives are, as it were, fused with His. May the splendors of divine faith fill your minds, so that, like Him, you see, judge, reason according to God. May your hearts aspire as much as possible to the integrity of His heart which preserved undivided all its warmth, every one of its beats all its life for God alone. With the light of your mind and the ardor of your heart cultivate an absolute dedication to God. . . .

"Secondly, We wish you to be like the sun, which warms and vivifies. May the fire of your love shed warmth on the person and things that surround you. May your presence be felt wherever you are by the fervor of your charity. The devil has invaded the world with hate: it is up to you to bring back to life the power of love. There are so many still given to wickedness because they

have never been loved enough. Bring back to life whatever falls under the influence of your rays. Be, as Mary and with Mary, instruments of new life in souls that are dying of cold and hunger, who would eagerly return to their Father's house, if only they had the encouragement of your word, the spur of your example.

"Finally, like Mary, be strong against the 'enemy.' And here we are thinking not only of your own spiritual victory over him but of your collaboration for the good of souls. All Catholic Action, which should be in each member 'fair as the moon,' 'bright as the sun,' must also know how to be in the face of the 'enemy' as terrible as an army set in array.

"In Our recent encyclical '*Fulgens corona*' We have once again denounced the frightful plan that is taking shape 'to root out faith in Christ in the souls of men'; in this we see another invasion into the world of the enemy of God and man. And there are men—pitiable creatures—who serve as instruments for this work of destruction. A battle is now going on that daily increases in extent and violence, and therefore it is imperative that all Christians, but most especially all militant Catholics 'stand up and fight even to death, if that be necessary for their Holy Mother, the Church with the arms that are at their disposal' (cf. St. Bernard, op. 221, n. 3). We are not talking of a struggle between peoples with the destruction of homes and the loss of life that follows it. . . . We are speaking rather of the war that evil, in its thousand forms, wages against good; a war of hate against love; of indecency against purity, of selfishness against social justice, of violence against peaceableness, of tyranny against liberty.

"The final outcome of this war is assured, given the infallible word of God. The final triumph of good or evil will take place on that day when—we regret to say it—all those who wished to do without God and have died unrepentant shall depart with God's curse into eternal fire (*Matt. XXV, 41*). Yet there are battles in this war whose outcome is uncertain for it has been entrusted also to the good will of men. In some sections, the 'enemy' has prevailed; these territories—souls that have strayed—must be retaken in order that Jesus may once again reign in hearts and in the world. . . .

Then turning his attention from the youth to the younger children, the Holy Father said:

"A final word We wish to address to the boys and girls who are listening in to tell them of Our desire. You know how much Jesus loves you, how tenderly He embraces you. When He spoke to the people of His time He pointed to you as examples of those

who will enter the kingdom of heaven. The Holy Father also loves you, as Jesus loved you. You are his pets, as you were the apple of Jesus' eye.

"Well now, dear children, the Holy Father has need of you. The Holy Father has so many anxieties, so many fears about what is going to happen to this world that is threatened with ruin. Do you want to help the Holy Father? Do you want to help the Church save the world, to save humanity that is in such danger? Well, then, lift up your bright, pure eyes to heaven, join your little hands together and offer Jesus your innocence. Ask Jesus to save the Church, ask Him to save souls. Try to be, with your prayers and your sacrifices, the guardian angels of Catholic Action, which places in you its fondest hopes."

At the close of his discourse the Holy Father asked all to kneel together with him and recite the following prayer:



TO MARY

O Virgin, fair as the moon, delight of the heavens, upon whose countenance angels and blessed gaze, grant that we thy children may grow more and more unto thy likeness and that our souls may receive a ray of thy beauty that will not dim with the years but shine forth for all eternity.

O Mary, sun of heaven, reawaken life wherever there is darkness. Mirror thyself in the faces of thy children, and grant to all of us reflection of thy light and thy ardor.

O Mary, strong as an army, grant victory to our ranks. We are so weak and our enemy is ferocious in his pride. Yet under thy standard we feel confident of victory over him; he knows full well the power of your heel, he trembles before the majesty of your glance. Save us, O Mary! fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array, and inspired not by hate but by the flames of love. Amen.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Chaos of Modern Thinking

THE NEW TOWER OF BABEL

By Dietrich von Hildebrand

Kenedy, \$3.00

Seven essays intended to examine various manifestations of escape from God make up this remarkably integrated book in

which Dr. von Hildebrand strikes at the roots of the basic intellectual diseases of our times.

In the title essay the chaos of modern thinking is clearly exposed. Basically, man has come to deny his creaturehood, and to proclaim his own sovereignty. Individualistic self-sufficiency (as in many Western democratic countries) and collective anti-personalism (as in atheistic communism) are among the results. This essay lays the foundation for the succeeding essays, which treat of several facets suggested here.

In the second essay Dr. von Hildebrand shows how relativism, pragmatism, historicism, and psychologism have dethroned objective truth. The root cause, this philosopher insists, is the denial of any *religio*; it is "the postasy from God, the rebellion of man against the Father of all truth, the refusal to accept the condition of a creature and the glorious vocation of being an image of God."

How does the new functionalism stand in relation to the Catholic ethos, is a question asked in "The New Functionalism in the Light of Christ." It would be unjust to summarize the author's brilliant argumentation, but the answer is: they are basically incompatible.

The fourth essay, "Catholicism and Unprejudiced Knowledge," merits the careful study of all university professors and students. Here the philosopher treats both negative attitudes that interfere with the capacity of apprehension (e.g., metaphysical indolence, incapacity to let things themselves instruct us, rebellion against the existence of objective values, and a constitutional distrust toward things) and their positive counterparts. He also treats such serious generic errors as eidetic blindness, a false idea of amplitude, and neutralism. His concluding remarks on the function of the Catholic university as a community of students and teachers—not a "ghetto" for Catholics—are excellent.

The last three essays form a fitting conclusion to a book that will delight all personalities. "The Role of Reverence in Education," a recurrent theme in this book, is treated specifically in the fifth essay; whereas the following essay, entitled "Beauty in the Light of the Redemption," leaves no doubt as to the importance of beauty in the life of a Christian. When modern anti-personalism—particularly the "heresy of efficiency"—displaces reverence and beauty man loses the sense of vocation and human nature is severely injured. This is one theme in the final essay, "Efficiency and Holiness."

After reading a book like *The New Tower of Babel* many will be inclined to endorse a comment once made by one of the author's appreciative students: "Dr. von Hildebrand never says anything insignificant."

BRENDAN O'GRADY

The Unformed and the Uninformed

CHRISTOPHER'S TALKS TO CATHOLIC TEACHERS

By David L. Greenstock
Templegate, \$3.75

If ever there were a profession divinely designed to eliminate a temptation to pride, it is teaching. You major in failure. You know from the start that to reach you

goal in every soul is a satisfaction forever denied you. Therefore, when you take up a book on teaching you can expect to feel humiliated. This book is no exception.

Father Greenstock draws his theme from Pius XI's encyclical *The Christian Education of Youth*. Here the aim of the teaching apostolate is clearly defined: "To enoble, guide, and perfect . . . the sum total of a man's activity, sensible and spiritual, intellectual and moral, domestic and social." Such an ideal has height, breadth, and depth. Father Greenstock invites Catholic teachers to explore all three dimensions through high ideals, broader professional techniques, and a deeper penetration into the souls of their children. What's more he proves that it can be done. For in each chapter of this book he does provide for this very integration of every phase of a man's activity, even when the "man" concerned happens to be five years old.

Father Greenstock frankly faces the fact that, for the most part, Catholic education has failed to realize this ideal. Conditions in modern society testify that our religious training simply doesn't "stick." The defects to which Father attributes this failure are personified in two types of teachers: the unformed and uninformed. The unformed are they whose spirituality is too shallow to be shared; unfortunately they will never read this book—there is nothing clever or different about it to compel their attention. The uninformed are those who, in spite of sincerity and zeal, fail to reach their pupils through ignorance of modern methods, sound psychology, and contemporary social problems. It is to this group that Father offers his concrete plan for making religion the most attractive subject in the curriculum.

Father Greenstock's methods are truly progressive. They avoid the extremes of both the pseudo-progressive and the stagnantly traditional procedures. For a generation reared on sentiment rather than reason he urges a doctrine based on truth rather than emotion. He displays a genius for making this truth tangible through activities involving the child's total personality.

Experienced teachers may be impatient, if not offended, at the painstaking detail and superfluous admonitions in some chapters. Yet for all his thoroughness, it is interesting, but a little disappointing, for a religious teacher to note that in Father's program for forming the ideal Christian there is no specific provision for teaching the habit of mental prayer. Surely the prayer of the mind which reaches consummation in the prayer of the will is essential to that integrity of soul which is our ultimate end.

Too many teachers have expanded the Augustinian dictum "Love God and do as you please" to read "Love God and teach as you please." Father Greenstock's book is a challenge to roll up our pedagogical sleeves and work to make our religious teaching fresh, forceful, and for keeping

SISTER M. ELIZABETH MICHAEL, O.P.

Formation of Priests

CHRIST IN OUR TIME

By Raoul Plus, S.J.

Newman, \$2.25

How little of Christ there is in those who are Christians. It is a powerful plea for a deeper knowledge and a more personal acquaintance with Christ.

The first part, "Christ in the Mind," is directed principally to those responsible for the formation of priests and there are many references to the situation in France. This does not lessen its value for ourselves, even for those who have no connection with seminaries. The second part, "How to Bring Christ into Human Lives," is a precious distillation of the thought and experience of this ardent disciple of Christ.

Here is the author's own presentation of the problem and his solution: "How can we give to Christians the word which will end this harmful and painful disparation between Christ and human life; and in souls the same separation between their Christianity and their ordinary existence? We can see but one way of doing this: to give them the full knowledge of what is demanded by the complete life in Christ."

J. V. C.

Carbon Copies

OFF THE RECORD

By Ronald Knox

Sheed & Ward, \$2.50

Each time you have a question or doubt, here is the book for you.

This book is a collection of answers which Monsignor Knox wrote to a widely divergent group of people, most of whom were unknown to him and with most of whom he didn't correspond more than a few times. Because Monsignor Knox is a widely-known convert, many people, either inside the Church or on the verge of coming in, felt he could answer the questions that assailed them. As they were unknown to him in most cases, they probably felt they could ask, without "losing face," the questions which really troubled them. For various reasons, one of which was to avoid being misquoted, Monsignor Knox kept carbon copies of his answers. Some time later, he happened to come across these answers and decided to compile them into a collection after deleting all personal landmarks. The present book is the result.

There are fifty-one letters to different people on subjects ranging from the existence of God to a discussion of the second collection at Mass over-running the Consecration. Being the scholar he is, Monsignor Knox can quote with equal facility from the Old or New Testament.

It is amazing to realize that the things which bother us, maybe only subconsciously, also bother other people. However, if we personally are ever assailed by the questions here presented, this book may help us realize the doubts which other people have to face and it may inspire us to be more patient with them and to pray for them more often.

IRENE MALONEY

Poetic Realism

THE WATER AND THE FIRE

By Gerald Vann, O.P.
Sheed & Ward, \$2.75

If asked to name the spiritual writer most widely read by the American laity today, I would unhesitatingly nominate Father

Gerald Vann. He has the faculty of observing the contemporary scene with the realism of a Thomist through the soul of a poet. He can point out the beauties of God's created world and the "poetry of holiness" (his favorite phrase), yet show at the same time, with ruthless yet loving clarity, the plight of man in the secularized modern world.

The particular plight with which Father Vann is concerned in this book is the loss of symbolism, which leaves modern man spiritually and psychologically denuded. The first chapter, "The World of Tomorrow," is a penetrating analysis of our present situation, and it brings a chill to the heart. Yet Father Vann, though a realist in the Christian sense, is not a pessimist. His book is a plea to Christians to recover, in the "stillness of vision," their sense of awareness of the eternal truths expressed through the ages by symbol, and not only this, but to recover their sense of oneness with humanity, as expressed in symbol and myth throughout the ages.

Father Vann discusses many aspects of the modern problem—education, the role of woman today, etc.—but he is most concerned to point out the similarities of the age-old myths with the "Christian myth," similarities by no means as striking as the differences. In Christ the Hero-King of myth has become a reality, His kingdom "not of this world," and His sacrifice a self-sacrifice for the souls of men. In other words, Christ "incarnated in His death and resurrection an inner experience that had existed potentially for centuries in the human soul, but that had never passed beyond the sphere of the dream." In Christ's humanity the dream, age-old in man, became real for all humanity. Yet the difference is the difference between reality and a dream. The bread, the water and the wine are translated from symbol into the reality of the Body and Blood of the Savior of the World—the New Fire lighted at Easter is the consuming fire of the love of Christ, yet also the Light of the World.

"We need," says Father Vann, "to go beyond the findings of reason, beyond the intimations of nature, myth and symbol, and launch out into the deep waters of direct communion with God." This is not easy, but it is the last hope before the shadows close over our sick world. And it is in the reality of God that the rhythm of going into darkness, to emerge at last into light, so apparent in all human myths, must be realized. It is in the awareness of our nothingness before God, of the darkness before us, that we can have vision, that the hope of restoring something of integrity to ourselves and our fellows will lie. It is in the restoration of awe and reverence in the human heart that the age of the Paraclete, of which Father Vann speaks, can come. And it is precisely the author's sense of urgency and immediacy which gives his book so much importance. Christians must *live* the life of contemplation, knowing their weakness, stripped of everything but their weakness, so that "then the Spirit can flow into you, the dry bones can live again, the fountains of water can spring up into life everlasting, and through you the face of the earth can be renewed

JANET KNIGHT

A Scientist's Last Testament

REFLECTIONS ON LIFE

By Alexis Carrel
Hawthorne, \$3.00

This last work of the great French biologist was edited by his widow; it is a moving testament of a scientist and a Catholic Frenchman. At first one is

tempted to dismiss the book as the testy critique of the modern world by a sour old man. Certainly Carrel paints a rather dark picture of the stupidity of man, who now has a better knowledge of the laws of life and the means to fulfill them, yet violates them ruthlessly in an orgy of self-indulgence. Gradually, the reader begins to realize that he is in the presence of a man whose deep penetration of human biology has enabled him to see that the age-old wisdom of mankind and the revelation of the Catholic Church were right in insisting that there are fundamental laws of life that must be obeyed or man will perish with his institutions.

It is gratifying that in this work Carrel does not hesitate to support the Catholic position on many questions. Yet he is mostly the scientist, and there are times when one feels that his presentation of the faith should have been more carefully stated. It is not possible to go into details in this review. There is the possibility that the tentative tone adopted by Carrel in his references to faith may have been assumed because of the audience he hoped to attract. The author's position on eugenics is very strongly stated, yet he does not propose any specific means. Nevertheless, he does seem to deny the right to married life to those who are suffering from congenital weaknesses; this is a position which is more severe than that of the Church.

Although the book has to be read carefully, it is a powerful testimony to the need for self-discipline and spiritual growth, which is the perennial message of the gospel.

J. V. C.

Liberal on a Bus

THE RISE AND FALL OF LIBERALISM

By Thomas P. Neill, Ph.D.
Bruce, \$5.50

My favorite reading place is on the bus. Since my ride begins at the end of the line I am assured of a seat. Having established a reputation among the neighbors as a peculiar character, they do not

bother to burden me with conversation. I have to change busses and give up my seat, but I have also mastered the art of clinging to a bus pole and balance my book and lunch so as to read fairly well while standing. Hence this is a tripartetic review of a man-on-the bus of the work of a history professor at St. Louis University.

Doctor Neill traces the history of liberalism up to World War I, and promises a second volume to bring the story up to date. He explains how and why liberalism meant one thing in the nineteenth century and means another thing today. "The drive of the liberal throughout modern history has been against authority of any kind," he says. In the nineteenth century it was against the state in favor of the freedom of so-called economic laws. The liberal success in this era was midwife to modern big business and industry. Then the liberal found that authority was taken over by what he had previously championed. He then became the welfare liberal who tends to ally himself with the state against big business.

I have called myself a Catholic liberal, one of those who is currently being spattered with contumely, as an egghead. I try to understand problems raised by the factory to which so many give such a large slice of their lives. The factory remains as a monument to the old liberalism which Doctor Neill describes, and a battleground for the new liberalism which turns inward the guns that his predecessor mounted on the factory walls.

Doctor Neill says the old liberals were victims of two heresies: Cartesianism and Rousseauvianism. One insisted "that man was inherently perfect" and the other placed "naïve trust in man's almost infallible reason and power." Too many modern liberals have been guilty of these same mistakes. The Catholic has the corrective of these errors in his acknowledgment of original sin, and respect for the power of the emotions and over reason. He should be able to escape the trend of some liberals toward socialism. The old liberal was an enemy of the worker, the modern liberal his friend. Without the restraint of religion he could lead him into world servitude.

I judge a book by the number of places where the mind goes "boing" and a passage lights up, because it parallels my thought, gives an explanation of something cloudy to me, or gives "one furiously to think" as Hercule Poirot used to say in the whodunits. I like books that start trains of thought which could lead to books themselves. This book qualifies well in these categories. For example I liked the definition of the modern idea of progress: "The modern idea of progress, which is intimately associated with liberal thought, secularizes the Christian concept of history by accepting its linear pattern of progress toward the kingdom of God through time and converting the goal of history from the kingdom of God to a world of material plenty existing in the temporal future." This idea is still widely held. I sometimes wonder if all the daily traffic to and from the assembly line, which moves all the time, producing a changing models, together with the tremendous concentration on trifles in the factory is not a kind of toy progress machine with which many fool themselves, while the world goes backward in basic things.

While I try to figure out the mystery of my daily bus trip I can at least sense the progress in the stream of sane books like Doctor Neill's which are piling up the true picture of our age so that some day we and our children will understand it. I will be looking forward to the author's study of the New Deal liberalism which will bring his story up to the present time.

JOHN C. HICKS

If Your Apologetics Are Rusty

WISDOM SHALL ENTER
By Leo J. Trese
Fides, \$2.75

Father Trese's latest book is an apology for the Catholic faith couched in very approachable terms. Beginning with an essay on the existence of a Supreme

Being proven by reason alone, he proceeds to the development of the human being, his relationship with God—religion, proves the divinity of Jesus Christ, and deals with the visible organization established by the Son of God to teach all men the duties of religion—the Church. The attributes of the true Church—that it is one, holy, catholic, apostolic—are treated in succeeding chapters. Two appendices follow, the first

the attributes of God, the second dealing skillfully with that old bugaboo: "Can a person get to heaven without being a Catholic?" or salvation outside the Church.

Although there is an enormous amount of material in these comparatively few pages (150), the reader does not feel smothered, for the transition from point to point is exceedingly smooth, and the illustrations of philosophical notions much more interesting than the prosaic "take that tree out there" that my philosophy teacher used.

The book is suggested for discussion groups, high school religion courses, and for those interested in conversions. It will also help those whose apologetics have gotten rusty and stimulate them to further search for philosophy and theology books of interest to laymen.

CECELIA J. GREGORY

The Sermon on the Mount

THE KINGDOM IS YOURS
By P. Forestier, S.M.
Fides, \$3.50

Father Forestier has done an outstanding job of interpreting the words of Jesus as recorded in the gospels by using simple analogies and examples to illustrate the meaningfulness of every word. His aim, to teach religion as recommended by St. Augustine: "By telling the story of God's love in historical order, and by awakening in the hearts of those being instructed sentiments of faith, hope, and charity," has been achieved most effectively.

This first of a two-volume series is about "The Sermon on the Mount" and "The Gospel of the Eucharist." Volume Two will present meditations on "The Divine Childhood of Christ," "The Sacred Passion," and "The Glorious Resurrection."

If you are of the erroneous opinion that meditations are flowery phrases to be read at bedtime for the sole purpose of flattering the ego and inducing a relaxed sleep, this book will be a complete disappointment. Father Forestier's words are directed at each and every individual who would call himself a Christian. Despite the present-day tendency to rationalize on many of the points Christ made clear in His teachings, Father Forestier quietly but firmly insists that a spade is still a spade.

Through "The Sermon on the Mount" Christ gave us all the guides necessary to salvation of our souls, and Father says, "Our Lord wanted to forewarn us against the common error of imagining that the conquest of the kingdom is an easy matter requiring little effort." After Father Forestier establishes the fact that the struggle of all human beings for the Beatific Vision is futile without the special aid of Christ, he goes on to explain "The Gospel of the Eucharist" and Christ's words, "If anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." He shows how Christ, through divine love, places Himself on the altar as an unbloody sacrifice at every Mass in order that we may become one with Him.

This book should be recommended not only to students and teachers, but also to the large number of adults who have finished their formal studies of religion.

MARIE J. NUCCI

BOOK NOTES

We are sorry to have overlooked *Cultural Co-operation and the Peace*—a published lecture of George N. Shuster (Bruce, \$2.75). It is a wise evaluation of the difficulties of international co-operation, especially on the cultural level. Dr. Shuster, one of the participants in the foundation of UNESCO, brings a sane Christian realism to his dispassionate appraisal of that most-criticized of organizations.—D. D.

Weeping Cross, a novel by Henry Stuart recently re-issued by Reynoldson (\$4.00), has attracted a great deal of comment. Published originally at the beginning of the century, its author evidently anticipated the themes and treatments of such Catholic novelists as Mauriac and Greene. However, in *Weeping Cross* there is none of the ambiguity in attitude toward evil which somehow mars the work of Stuart's successors; though there is the convincing portrayal of the anguished ambivalence of soul of the hero torn between his sinful love and his love of God. The style is probably not to everyone's taste; the author wrote it as a "relation," a literary form of the seventeenth century in which his story occurs.—D. D.

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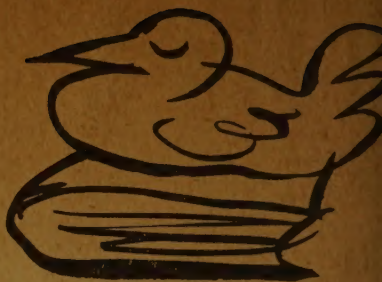
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